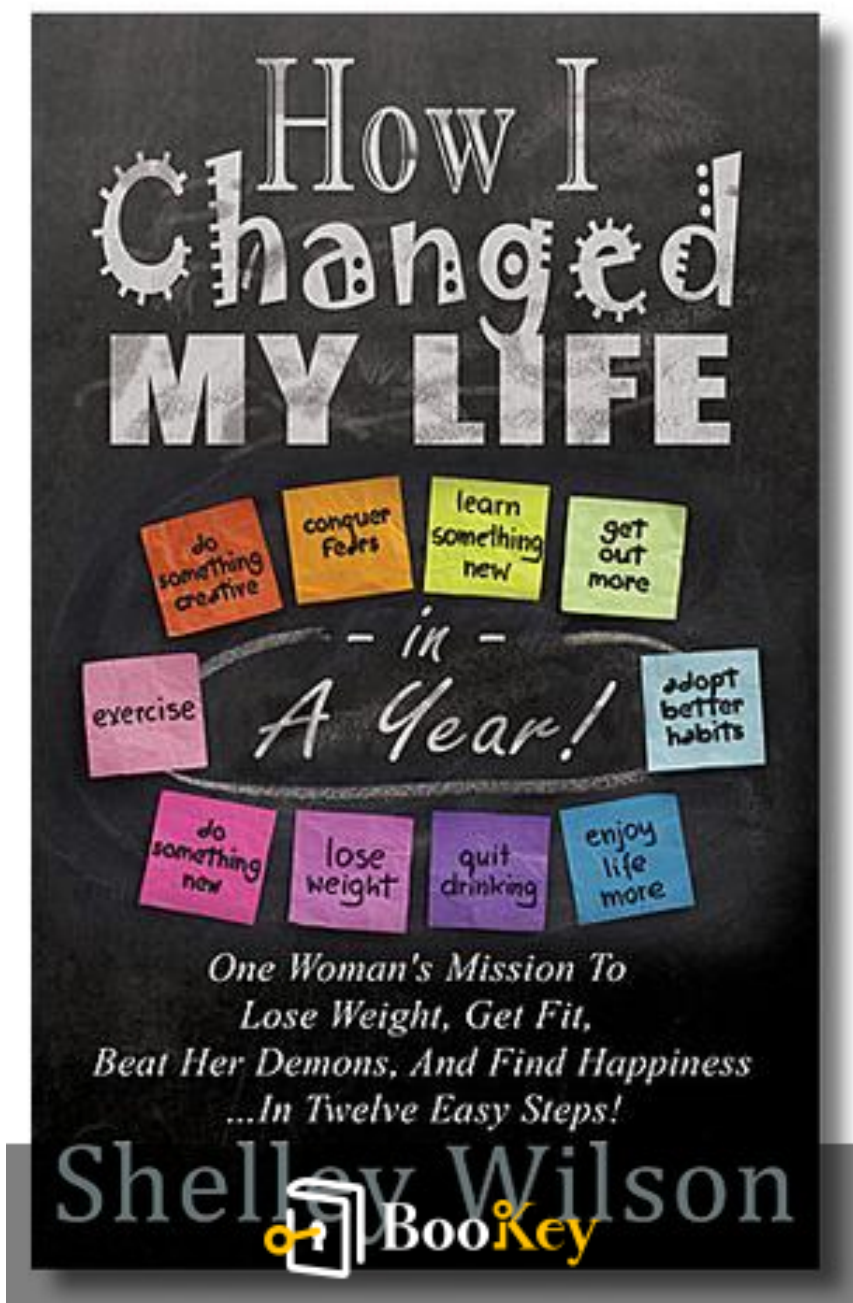


How I Changed My Life In A Year PDF (Limited Copy)

Shelley Wilson



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How I Changed My Life In A Year Summary

Transforming habits for lasting personal growth.

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About the book

In "How I Changed My Life in a Year," Shelley Wilson invites readers on a transformative journey, showcasing the power of resilience and personal growth through her year-long commitment to change. With relatable anecdotes and practical guidance, Wilson navigates the ups and downs of self-discovery, offering heartfelt insights into the challenges she faced and the lessons learned along the way. This inspiring narrative not only illuminates her personal evolution but also encourages readers to embark on their own paths of transformation, demonstrating that with determination and a willingness to embrace change, anyone can reshape their life in profound ways. Dive into this empowering story and uncover the tools necessary to ignite your own journey towards self-improvement.

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About the author

Shelley Wilson is a passionate writer, life coach, and motivational speaker renowned for her transformative insights and relatable storytelling. With a strong belief in the power of change and personal growth, she draws from her own experiences of overcoming adversity to inspire others on their journeys. An advocate for self-improvement and resilience, Wilson's work not only centers around personal development but also emphasizes actionable strategies to help individuals lead more fulfilling lives. As the author of "How I Changed My Life in a Year," she shares her journey of reinvention and empowerment, offering readers valuable lessons and encouragement to embark on their own paths of transformation.

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Chapter 1 Summary: Month 1: Lose Weight

In the opening chapters, the narrator embarks on a personal journey to lose weight while highlighting the increasingly popular resolution to read more books. She humorously admits that her own need for change stems from having to buy larger work trousers due to her expanding waistline. Faced with the unflattering realities of her physique — including so-called "four boobs" and back fat — she resolves not to simply go on a diet but to start a healthy eating regime, aiming to break unhealthy habits in 21 days.

Recognizing her need for accountability, she joins Weight Watchers, a weight loss program that combines weekly meetings and online resources. Her initial weigh-in reveals she has gained two stone (28 pounds) over the last seven months, igniting a determination to change her habits. Weight Watchers leader, Andrea, guides the group in purging their kitchens of unhealthy temptations, which the narrator humorously narrates as a daunting task, involving a significant cleanout of her fridge filled with treats.

By the end of the third week, the narrator experiences early success with a six-pound weight loss, although the weekend poses challenges. She humorously recounts a moment of weakness during an emotionally charged movie night, which leads her to indulge in snacks but quickly reclaims her focus by prepping healthy meals for the week ahead. In these weeks, she learns about the psychological factors behind eating urges, such as the

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difference between real hunger and hedonic hunger, which complicates her journey.

With the tough winter weather keeping her active, she walks her daughter to school, and despite setbacks, she remains optimistic and committed to her goals. The narrator balances treats and healthy eating, adjusting her daily meals significantly—choosing porridge and homemade soups instead of processed foods—demonstrating her shift in mindset towards nutrition.

By the end of the first month, she weighs in ten pounds lighter and acknowledges the invaluable social support received from her Weight Watchers meetings. The experience has prompted her to reconsider her family’s dietary habits and embrace a healthier lifestyle, complete with experimentation in the kitchen and involvement from her children. She humorously reflects on her cravings and occasional daydreams of indulging in junk food, but ultimately celebrates her progress, feeling more energized and motivated as she heads into the next month with renewed determination.

Key Themes	Description
Personal Journey	Narrator embarks on weight loss and reading more books; humorous admission of needing larger work trousers.
Need for Change	Confronts unflattering realities of body image, resolves to start a healthy eating regime to break unhealthy habits in 21 days.
Accountability	Joins Weight Watchers for support; initial weigh-in reveals a gain of

Key Themes	Description
	two stone (28 pounds).
Supportive Environment	Weight Watchers leader helps purge unhealthy foods from kitchens, a humorous and daunting task for the narrator.
Early Success	Loses six pounds by the end of week three, encounters challenges during a movie night but refocuses by meal prepping.
Psychological Insights	Learns about psychological triggers for eating urges; distinguishes between true hunger and hedonic hunger.
Family Involvement	Reconsiders family's dietary habits, involves children in healthy cooking, and experiments in the kitchen.
Progress & Motivation	By end of month one, loses ten pounds, gains energy and motivation; celebrates progress despite cravings and junk food daydreams.

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Chapter 2 Summary: Month 2: Get Fit

In this chapter, the narrator embarks on the journey of self-improvement with the resolution to "Move More" rather than striving for a lofty fitness goal after years of a sedentary lifestyle. Recognizing that the minimum recommended activity is 150 minutes of exercise weekly, she sets a target of a simple half-hour routine.

Reflecting on her childhood, she nostalgically recalls skipping with friends in carefree days, but her attempts at skipping as an adult prove comically challenging. She transforms her living room into a makeshift gym, leading to a humorous scene of flab jiggling and an overwhelming sense of exhaustion after just a few minutes. The plan then evolves into a manageable triathlon routine of five minutes each of skipping, stair running, and wall slides, resulting in a small triumph—losing a pound at Weight Watchers.

Next, the narrator tackles walking, albeit with some embarrassment over her technique and appearance. Aiming to walk at a faster pace for better weight loss, she realizes the benefits beyond shedding pounds. Walking lifts her mood, reduces stress, and offers various health advantages, serving as a reminder that simple movements can lead to improved well-being.

As she continues her quest to "Move More," she also nostalgically revisits exercises from her youth, like hula hooping and walking. By week eight, she



decides to embrace the modern fitness craze with a Wii Fit video game, which sparks both fun and frustration, particularly after nearly being clocked by her son's remote during a dance session. Thus, she opts for less chaotic Wii Fit exercises that still push her limits.

Approaching week nine, the narrator draws inspiration from her cycling father, despite not sharing his athletic prowess. After obtaining an exercise bike, she finds it a practical way to strengthen her legs without risking injury, especially given her history with knee issues. Enjoying her newfound routine, she appreciates the versatility of exercising from home, often multitasking with TV shows or music.

In summary, this chapter outlines the narrator's progression toward greater fitness through humorous and relatable anecdotes, showcasing her early struggles, small victories, and a light-hearted journey into reintroducing exercise into her life. As she completes the second month of her "Move More" mission, she celebrates the steps taken, both physically and emotionally, towards becoming a healthier version of herself.

Key Points	Details
Resolution	"Move More" instead of aiming for lofty fitness goals.
Exercise Target	Set a goal of 150 minutes of exercise per week, starting with a half-hour routine.

Key Points	Details
Childhood Reflection	Nostalgic memories of skipping with friends; adult attempts are challenging.
Home Gym Setup	Transforms living room into a gym, leading to humorous exhaustion.
Triathlon Routine	Creates a manageable routine of skipping, stair running, and wall slides.
Weight Loss	Achieves a milestone of losing a pound at Weight Watchers.
Walking Embarrassment	Faces embarrassment over technique but finds mood and health benefits.
Fun Nostalgia	Revisits youth exercises like hula hooping and walking.
Wii Fit Experience	Tries Wii Fit; experiences fun and frustration, settles on less chaotic exercises.
Cycling Inspiration	Inspired by her father, uses an exercise bike for safe leg strengthening.
Home Exercise Benefits	Enjoys exercising at home while multitasking with TV or music.
Chapter Summary	Narrator's humorous and relatable journey of self-improvement through small victories and a commitment to a healthier lifestyle.

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Chapter 3 Summary: Month 3: Do Something Creative

The chapter begins with a reflection on creativity, highlighting that it manifests uniquely in everyone. The author shares examples from her life, mentioning friends and family who excel in various crafts—from knitting and painting to card-making—before revealing that her own creative outlet lies in writing. Her passion for storytelling blossomed from a deep love of reading, with her childhood favorite, Enid Blyton's **The Folk of the Faraway Tree**, still cherished decades later. Early in her life, she wrote stories and poems, even presenting a children's picture book in class at the age of fifteen. However, like many aspiring writers, her manuscripts gathered dust as self-doubt and life's demands interrupted her creativity.

On New Year's Eve, the author resolves to overcome her procrastination by making writing a priority, inspired by the quote, "You will never win if you never begin." She lists actionable steps to reignite her creative flow, which include enrolling in a creative writing class, entering competitions, writing book reviews, and committing to daily writing. This structured approach leads her to discover that with passion, time can always be found.

As her creativity flourishes, she reflects on incorporating her professional experience into her writing. She runs vision board workshops to help clients articulate their dreams for various aspects of their lives. This sparks an idea: using vision boards to aid storytelling. By compiling images and words from

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magazines that resonate with her, she inspires new story ideas, alleviating writer's block.

The author encourages readers to create their own vision boards as a way to visualize aspirations or kick-start creativity. Besides writing, she presents fundraising ideas for charities, emphasizing the impact of creative approaches. A personal tragedy—the loss of her cousin Lee to Sudden Unexplained Death from Epilepsy (SUDEP)—ignites her commitment to raising awareness and funds for Epilepsy Research UK. With the support of family and friends, she participates in various fundraising initiatives, ultimately culminating in an invitation to promote their cause at No. 10 Downing Street.

Further, the author introduces the concept of Zentangle, a meditative art form that involves doodling intricate patterns as a creative outlet. Developed by Rick Roberts and Maria Thomas, Zentangle serves as both a therapeutic practice and a fun artistic endeavor. Emphasizing that there's no right or wrong in this art form, she provides instructions for beginners to create their own tangles.

The chapter concludes with the author reflecting on how her newfound creative practices have enriched her life, bolstered her self-confidence, and empowered her to pursue her writing ambitions and charitable endeavors more vigorously. Ultimately, creativity becomes a vibrant force in her life,

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one that she joyfully shares with those around her.

Key Points	Details
Creativity Reflection	Everyone expresses creativity uniquely; the author highlights her interests versus those of friends and family.
Personal Outlet	The author identifies writing as her creative outlet, inspired by her love for reading (favorite book: *The Folk of the Faraway Tree*).
Early Writing	Started writing stories and poems from a young age, presented a children's book at age 15, but faced self-doubt.
New Year's Resolution	Resolved to make writing a priority, inspired by the quote "You will never win if you never begin."
Action Steps	Created a list of steps to reignite creativity: enroll in writing classes, enter contests, write reviews, daily writing commitment.
Incorporating Experience	Uses professional experience in vision board workshops, linking them to storytelling.
Vision Boards	Encourages creating vision boards for visualizing aspirations and enhancing creativity.
Charity Work	Engaged in fundraising for Epilepsy Research UK after personal loss, which strengthened her commitment.
Zentangle Introduction	Introduces Zentangle as a meditative doodling art form, encouraging creativity through patterns.
Final Reflection	Creative practices have improved her life, boosted self-confidence, and motivated her to engage more in writing and charity work.

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Chapter 4: Month 4: Give Up the Demon Drink

In the exploration of alcohol consumption, the author begins with a relatable reflection on how many individuals seamlessly integrate drinking into their daily lives. Activities like pub outings with colleagues, weekend brunches, and Sunday roasts often warrant a glass or two, ultimately leading to unintentional overindulgence. Motivated by a newfound desire for clarity and health, the author sets a 30-day resolution to abstain from alcohol, spurred by alarming self-revelation: their drinking habits fell into the 'binge level' category after assessing their consumption during a recent family get-together.

Drawing on governmental guidelines, the author reveals that men should limit their intake to three to four units daily, while women should aim for two to three units, equating to a modest glass of wine or a pint of beer. This stark contrast to the author's self-reported habits prompts a personal challenge: to navigate social scenarios and family vacations without alcohol. As they prepare for a holiday trip to Haven Holiday Village, a popular family destination, apprehensions about enjoyment without drinks loom large. However, upon arrival, the author surprises themselves by finding joy through alternate beverages and family activities, such as joining the kids in the pool and trying varied non-alcoholic drinks.

The holiday environment fosters resilience, enabling the author to undertake

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their mission without the anticipated struggle. They discover that enjoying leisure activities and exploring non-alcoholic options, like mocktails, can still create memorable experiences. The narrative also touches on joyous personal recollections, such as a past dance competition at the same holiday spot, amplifying the emotional resonance of the challenge.

Yet as the days wear on, cravings emerge alongside the social pressures of clients inquiring about their sobriety. Contrarily to earlier self-confidence, the author's resolve falters, revealing unexpected challenges. They delve into the neuroscience behind cravings, discovering that low blood sugar plays a significant role alongside psychological associations developed over years of drinking habits. Encouraged by the insight that habitual cues contribute to cravings, the author recognizes the importance of breaking these patterns by substituting alcohol with alternative activities, like brewing tea instead of pouring a glass of wine.

In search of camaraderie and guidance, the author finds inspiration in Tara Gladden's blog chronicling her own alcohol-free endeavor for a good cause, reinforcing the idea that purposeful motivation can ease the journey. Conclusively, the author reflects on their quest: while difficult, completing the month-long resolution not only promotes a healthier lifestyle but further empowers them to embrace new habits. They highlight resources like Drinkaware and Alcoholics Anonymous for those considering a similar path, and affirm that personal growth often arises from challenges like this,



making it a mission worthy of completion.

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Chapter 5 Summary: Month 5: Do Something I've Never Done

In these chapters, the protagonist embarks on a personal challenge each month, with May's resolution being to “Do Something I've Never Done Before.” Having recently completed a month of sobriety, she views this new challenge as a refreshing opportunity to mix things up in her life.

Her first unexpected experience arises when she volunteers to run a Stress-Busting Workshop for a local junior school, particularly motivated by her own daughter's anxiety about SATs. Drawing from her expertise in Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), a simple energy therapy designed to relieve emotional negativity, she creates a fun and engaging session for the year six students. The children respond enthusiastically, which provides her with a profound sense of satisfaction and confirms her love for working with children. While running the workshop is an achievement in itself, it sets a positive tone for her month of exploration.

Following this success, she decides to tackle another item from her bucket list—a fairy garden project with her daughter, evoking childhood memories. They creatively use an old wine crate to construct their garden, illustrating the joyful experience of engaging in simple, imaginative activities. This reinforces her realization that new experiences don't need to be extraordinary to be significant; it's often the little things that provide joy.

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As the weeks unfold, she extends her challenge to include sewing, an area in which she lacks experience. With the help of a friend, she successfully creates a cushion cover. This accomplishment marks another milestone in her journey, showing her growing comfort with challenges outside her comfort zone.

However, the next week's plans take a more ambitious turn as she chooses to embark on a massive flat-pack furniture project in preparation for her daughter's surprise bedroom makeover. Despite the physical toll and stress of the task, she finds fulfillment in her accomplishment and the happiness it brings her daughter.

Finally, as the month wraps up, she prepares for a more thrilling venture: a zip wire experience during a family holiday at Center Parcs. Initially apprehensive, especially when surrounded by energetic children, she overcomes her fears, successfully completing the jump with a scream that captures the attention of onlookers. The exhilaration provides a fitting conclusion to her month of embracing the unfamiliar. Reflecting on her journey, she recognizes the value in taking risks and stepping outside her usual routine, culminating in a memorable lesson in resilience and self-discovery.

Overall, May becomes a transformative month filled with growth and

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exploration, underscored by a blend of joyful activities and novel challenges that ultimately strengthen the protagonist's relationship with her children and enhance her own sense of adventure.

Aspect	Details
Monthly Challenge	Do Something I've Never Done Before
Background	Recently completed a month of sobriety, seeking refreshing changes.
First Experience	Volunteer Stress-Busting Workshop for local junior school, inspired by daughter's SAT anxiety, utilizing EFT.
Children's Response	Children enthusiastically engage, reinforcing protagonist's love for working with kids.
Second Experience	Fairy garden project with daughter using an old wine crate, highlights joy in simple activities.
Third Experience	Sewing challenge, creates a cushion cover with friend's help, marks growth in confidence.
Fourth Experience	Flat-pack furniture project for daughter's bedroom, provides fulfillment despite being physically demanding.
Final Experience	Zip wire experience at Center Parcs, overcomes fears and achieves exhilarating jump.
Conclusion	Reflects on the transformative month, recognizing the value of taking risks and enhancing relationships with children.
Overall Theme	Growth, exploration, resilience, and self-discovery through joyful activities and challenges.

Chapter 6 Summary: Month 6: Adopt Better Habits

Chapter Summary

As the sixth month began, the sun shone brightly, bringing a welcome sense of optimism. Still feeling the lingering effects of a recent traumatic zip-lining experience, the protagonist determined to focus on a calmer challenge: “Adopt Better Habits.” This goal arose after a realization of neglecting her recycling efforts, morphing into a broader objective of holistic improvement.

She highlighted “space clearing” as a crucial aspect of personal development, suggesting that decluttering one’s environment can lead to a clearer mind. The chapter outlines four practical steps for achieving inner peace through decluttering:

1. **Take Responsibility.** Acknowledging personal clutter is the first step towards change. The protagonist often engages in decluttering to rejuvenate her energy, sharing a memorable Japanese proverb: "The day you decide to do it is your lucky day." Clearing out forgotten items often yields unexpected treasures.
2. **Take it Slowly.** She encourages readers to approach decluttering at a



manageable pace, suggesting to tackle one room at a time and break it down into smaller tasks, such as clearing a single drawer or shelf. This method can lessen feelings of overwhelm.

3. Tools to Help: Simple tools required for decluttering include a large cup of coffee and three labeled boxes: one for donating items in good condition, another for items to throw away, and a final one for selling. The chapter humorously emphasizes the excitement of a car boot sale, particularly as summer approaches, to offload excess goods and potentially make some money.

4. Completion: Finalizing the decluttering process is crucial. The protagonist stresses the importance of not letting donation boxes linger at home or in the car. Instead, all items should be promptly delivered to their respective destinations.

The protagonist's resolution to adopt better habits soon led her outdoors, where she faced inclement weather while undertaking the challenge of growing her own food—an amusing contrast given her notorious lack of a green thumb. Years earlier, her father had created a vegetable patch, now overtaken by weeds. Determined, she began the arduous task of clearing and planting, during which she discovered a newfound interest in juggling, inspired by an email from author Douglas McPherson, who extolled juggling's benefits for cognitive function.



As the vegetables began to grow, the protagonist decided to further challenge herself by going vegetarian for a week. This was particularly daunting given her past experiences in health and nutrition, where it was advised that she limit red meat for digestive health. However, with her lighter mood and determination to maintain a healthy diet, she sought guidance from the book "**How To Eat Loads and Stay Slim**" by Della Galton and Peter Jones. This book offered an entertaining perspective on maintaining a satisfying diet without meat and provided ample vegetarian recipes.

Delighted by the participation of her younger son, who loved vegetables, she found joy in preparing colorful meals together. Much to her surprise, going vegetarian for a week turned out to be enjoyable and invigorating, leading to a promising sense of lightness and energy.

By the end of this month, she remained dedicated to incorporating more vegetables and fish into her diet while acknowledging the possibility of enjoying her beloved meat in moderation. The chapter concludes with an invitation for readers to embark on their own dietary challenges, utilizing the resources provided for guidance and support.

Thus, Month Six successfully culminated in a mission toward a healthier, lighter lifestyle—strategically rebuilding habits amid a humorous and

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reflective journey.

Key Themes	Description
Optimism	New month brings a positive outlook despite past challenges.
Main Goal	Adopt better habits, particularly in recycling and holistic improvement.
Space Clearing	Decluttering environment for clearer mind; includes practical steps.
1. Take Responsibility	Acknowledge personal clutter and rejuvenate energy through decluttering.
2. Take it Slowly	Encouragement to declutter at a manageable pace, one step at a time.
3. Tools to Help	Use a cup of coffee and three labeled boxes for organizing items.
4. Completion	Importance of promptly delivering donation items to final destinations.
Outdoor Challenge	Protagonist's journey to grow her own food, overcoming her gardening inexperience.
Going Vegetarian	Attempt to go vegetarian for a week leads to joy and newfound energy.
Family Involvement	Enjoyable cooking experiences with her younger son.
Dietary Reflection	Incorporating more veggies and fish while allowing moderation for meat.
Invitation to Readers	Encouragement for readers to take on their dietary challenges.
Outcome	Successful month towards a healthier lifestyle, focusing on habit

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Key Themes	Description
	rebuilding.

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Chapter 7 Summary: My Six Month Summary

In this inspiring narrative, the author recounts a transformative six-month personal challenge aimed at self-improvement and achievement. Initially, the goals set at the beginning of the year were modest—losing weight, being able to run without assistance, and publishing a story. However, as the months unfolded, the author not only met these goals but exceeded them.

In the first month, a new weight loss campaign kicked off, resulting in the loss of ten pounds by the second month, albeit with some fluctuations due to an alcohol-free month characterized by indulgent snacks like Wispa bars. With guidance from Della Galton and Peter Jones's book, "How to Eat Loads and Stay Slim," the author navigated through ups and downs, ultimately achieving a meat-free week by month six.

The second month also saw a focus on physical activity, incorporating varied forms of exercise like walking, cycling, and using Wii Fit. Although fitness goals were somewhat fuzzy, this endeavor led to improved sleep and heightened awareness of physical well-being.

Month three became a creative powerhouse, highlighting a crucial writing journey. Inspired by the adage that aspiring writers must write, the author pursued writing fervently, culminating in a published article about vision boards in "Writers' Forum" magazine by the talented Paula Williams.

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The fourth month overlapped with previous efforts, as it was an alcohol-free month that coincided with Easter, resulting in new experiences, including a humorous episode at the circus thanks to a serendipitous encounter with Douglas McPherson, author of "Circus Mania," who enlightened the author about World Circus Day.

The fifth month brought forth further exploration of new activities: crafting a fairy garden with a daughter, learning quilting, and even conducting a workshop on Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) for sixth graders dealing with exam stress—a truly impactful experience. The month concluded with an exhilarating zip wire adventure, which significantly pushed personal boundaries.

By month six, the author was poised to motivate others, encouraging readers to declutter and even try vegetable gardening, drawing on the momentum gained over the preceding months. With the first half of the year completed, a second agenda awaited: challenges including giving up television and Facebook, travel writing across beautiful locations, and finally, participating in NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month) to write a 50,000-word novel.

Reflecting on this journey, the author calls readers to embrace their own potential, to step out of their comfort zones, explore creative avenues, and

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confidently embark on their personal achievements. The mantra "This is the best year of my life!" resonates as a rallying cry for all who seek to fulfill their aspirations.

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Chapter 8: Month 7: Appreciate What I Have By Giving Something Up

In this summary, we explore the lessons learned during a month-long challenge, emphasizing the themes of gratitude, self-discovery, and the influence of habits on our lives.

As the protagonist embarks on her month-seven challenges, she prepares herself for a series of self-imposed sacrifices to foster gratitude. The undertone of the challenge promotes self-awareness, beginning with the decision to forego certain comforts, including her car, Facebook, and television, for a week each. However, the most significant hurdle arises when her twelve-year-old daughter requests that she stop wearing black clothing, a staple in her wardrobe. Agreeing to the challenge, the mother realizes just how much black dominates her clothes, prompting an extensive search for alternatives.

This exploration into her wardrobe leads to a fascinating discovery: as she incorporates brighter colors into her outfits, she experiences a noticeable uplift in her mood. Wearing colors like red, navy, pink, and green each conjures different feelings, from energy and action to peace and laughter. This realization hints at the concept of color therapy, where colors are believed to have psychological effects. For instance, wearing red invigorates her productivity, while pink fosters relaxation. She reflects on how the

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emotional weight of her usual black attire has contributed to a gloomy mindset since her divorce, marking a pivotal realization towards her well-being.

The subsequent week without her car coincides with a heatwave in the UK. The protagonist utilizes this opportunity to connect with her daughter through the simple act of walking to school. During their daily treks, she faces challenges like carrying heavy groceries, yet also discovers newfound physical fitness and environmental consciousness. Her research into her carbon footprint reveals how her car usage impacts the earth, providing her insight into sustainable living.

As she navigates the following weeks, she faces the tough task of giving up Facebook. Initially, the idea seems simple, but she soon confronts her hidden reliance on the social media platform for family connections, business interactions, and entertainment. This week serves as an opportunity for introspection, as she evaluates the people she interacts with online, discovering the value of nurturing deeper relationships rather than superficial connections.

Finally, the challenge of going without television arrives, where laughter is shared as she humorously enters a radio segment to mark this closure dramatically. Although she misses her family movie nights, she embraces alternative sources of entertainment, managing to reclaim 17 hours of her



week for reading and writing.

In summary, month seven serves as a transformative journey for the protagonist, enabling her to recognize the emotional influence of her choices—be it clothing, transportation, social media, or entertainment. Through these challenges, she gains appreciation for her life, the environment, and the importance of connecting with her children beyond habitual routines. The culmination of her experiences leaves her invigorated, both personally and creatively, marking her mission for this month as completed.

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Chapter 9 Summary: Month 8: Get Out and About More

Summary of Chapter: "Get Out and About More"

In the eighth month of her personal challenge, the narrator decided to enhance her family's summer by venturing out more during the school holidays. Reflecting on past summers spent in solitude due to her responsibilities as a single mother, she opted to take her children to the picturesque village of Downton along the Cornish coast of England. Nostalgic about her own childhood adventures, she recognized the importance of creating new memories with her kids, particularly following her recent experience of gaining confidence in her parenting journey.

Initially hesitant about undertaking trips on her own as a single parent, the narrator prioritized safety while also craving the comfort of a small cottage rental instead of camping. Their chosen accommodation offered breathtaking sea views and was facilitated through a user-friendly booking platform, Cottages 4 You, which provided helpful local guides.

Cornwall's attractions were a delightful balance of relaxation and adventure. The family's itinerary included visiting the scenic towns of **Looe**—known for its medieval roots and charming harbor—and **Polperro**, a quaint fishing village. They also explored **Plymouth**, filled with family-friendly

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attractions and historical sights, and spent a day at **Mount Edgcumbe**, a stunning country park boasting remarkable views.

As the family journeyed northward to Somerset, a region celebrated for its cider and cheese, adventures included a day in **Glastonbury**, steeped in legends about King Arthur and known for its holistic lifestyle. They visited the iconic **Wookey Hole Caves**, famous for its natural beauty and intriguing legends, including the story of the Wookey Hole Witch.

Next, the narrator shifted focus to their local area, discovering attractions in and around Birmingham, which is rich in history and culture. This included nearby **Stratford-upon-Avon**, the birthplace of William Shakespeare, and local festivals in **Solihull**.

As a further exploration of the UK's cultural riches, the family embarked on a city break to **London**. Opting for less touristy sights, they visited landmarks such as the **Tower of London** and enjoyed a tranquil day in **Hyde Park**, filled with activities and laughter. They also experienced the vibrant atmosphere of South Bank, savoring local boutique shopping and outdoor amenities.

For the challenge's final week, the narrator enjoyed a special getaway with her daughter to the historic city of **York**. Together, they immersed



themselves in the city's rich history, exploring the **York Minster** and the engaging **York Castle Museum**. Here, their experience was highlighted by interactive elements that allowed children to engage with history, particularly during their exploration of the recreated Victorian street.

Together, they followed the whimsical **York Cat Trail** combining history with a scavenger hunt to discover hidden cat statues—an interesting nod to the city's past during the plague.

Throughout these adventures, the narrator not only uncovered the richness of her surroundings but deepened her relationship with her children. The chapter concludes with a heartfelt acknowledgment from her daughter, illustrating that the time spent together was the true highlight of their experiences.

The overall mission of the month: to rejuvenate a sense of exploration and to create memories that would last a lifetime was accomplished with joy and fulfillment. Through this journey, the narrator realized that engaging with both familiar and new places can be just as rewarding as distant travels—bringing a newfound appreciation for the world just outside one's door.

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Chapter 10 Summary: Month 9: Learn Something New

In the reflective narrative of the ninth month, the author embraces the joyous onset of autumn, a season symbolizing new beginnings and opportunities for learning. Amidst the crisp air and the vibrant colors of fall, the author embarks on a personal challenge to "Learn Something New." Amid her commitments as a full-time worker and mother of nine, she finds distance learning to be the perfect solution. With roots dating back to the 18th century, correspondence courses allow individuals worldwide to gain new skills and education conveniently. The text explores the history of distance learning, highlighting its evolution and advantages, such as accessibility and affordability.

As she broadens her horizons, the author shares a humorous yet enlightening experience attending a Speed Awareness course after receiving a speeding ticket. Despite initial reluctance, she discovers valuable lessons, including the futility of speeding for time savings—gaining only seconds at the cost of increased stress and fuel consumption. This experience reinforces the importance of being mindful while driving and maintaining an updated knowledge of the Highway Code.

Her journey continues as she marks week 38 by learning to knit, a skill inspired by her grandmother's sewing legacy. Under the tutelage of her friend Sarah, the author confronts the challenges and frustrations of



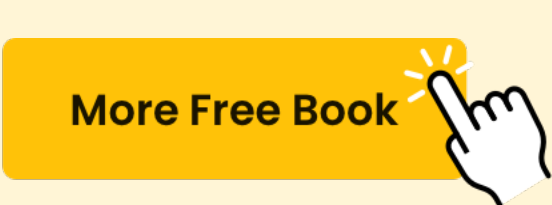
mastering this craft. Despite initial struggles, she learns the value of patience and embracing the beginner's mindset, taking comfort in the therapeutic nature of knitting.

Reflecting on her past experiences, the author emphasizes the transformative power of learning and personal growth. Having faced the trials of leaving an abusive marriage, she recognizes the strength derived from overcoming adversity and the lessons imparted by her children and own life journey.

Concluding her month of exploration, she shares her top 15 tips for a fulfilling life, such as emphasizing laughter, nurturing optimism, and the importance of self-care. These valuable insights serve as a reminder to balance personal needs while caring for others, encouraging readers to take their own steps towards ongoing learning and self-improvement.

As she proudly ticks off another item from her extensive bucket list, the author invites readers to seize the moment and engage in their own journeys of discovery. Month nine has been a resounding success, reinforcing her belief in the endless possibilities of growth and learning, regardless of life's challenges.

Key Theme	Description
Autumn	The author embraces autumn as a time for new beginnings and learning



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Key Theme	Description
Symbolism	opportunities.
Distance Learning	Author opts for distance learning due to her busy schedule; discusses its history, accessibility, and affordability.
Speed Awareness Course	Shares humorous experience attending a Speed Awareness course after a speeding ticket; learns valuable lessons about driving mindfulness.
Knit Learning	Begins knitting lessons, inspired by her grandmother; learns patience and the therapeutic value of crafting.
Personal Growth	Reflects on overcoming adversity from her past while acknowledging growth from life lessons.
Life Tips	Shares top 15 tips for a fulfilling life, emphasizing laughter, optimism, and self-care.
Call to Action	Encourages readers to engage in their own journeys of discovery, highlighting the importance of ongoing learning.

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Chapter 11 Summary: Month 10: Be Happy and Grateful

In the tenth month of the personal development journey, the challenge was to "Be Happy and Grateful." At first glance, this might seem straightforward; however, life's difficulties, like job loss or health issues, can cloud our ability to feel happiness and gratitude. Often, negative thoughts overshadow the positive aspects of our lives, making it easy to overlook even the simplest blessings.

Reflecting on childhood experiences, the author recalls the tradition of expressing gratitude before meals, a practice that became more meaningful with age. Gratitude is emphasized as a transformative practice, encouraging readers to identify their own sources of thankfulness, ranging from loved ones to personal comforts. The author lists ten personal gratitudes, including their supportive family and inspiring clients, showcasing how everyday elements contribute to overall happiness.

Family dinners serve as a platform for sharing highs and lows of the day, fostering open communication and perspective shifts. This ritual encourages appreciation for daily occurrences, both good and bad, allowing for a shared familial experience that can turn negatives into positives.

The author also champions the idea of keeping a gratitude journal, urging readers to jot down things they are thankful for each night. This simple

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practice can combat stress and negativity, reinforcing positive thoughts. The author shares that gratitude is about recognizing blessings—big and small—cultivating a mindset of abundance rather than scarcity.

Reflecting on stress and its impact on happiness, the author acknowledges that overcoming negative thinking patterns requires letting go of various burdens, such as excuses, unhealthy relationships, and the urge to impress others. Instead, embracing your true self and appreciating the present moment is proposed as a more fulfilling approach to living.

As the month progresses, the author introduces another challenge: giving and receiving compliments. Often, societal conditioning makes it uncomfortable to accept praise. The narrative encourages readers to embrace confidence and practice accepting compliments gracefully, transforming this awkwardness into a habit that uplifts both the giver and receiver.

To further conclude the month on a joyful note, the author advocates for embracing silliness and playfulness, especially during festive occasions like Halloween. Engaging in playful activities not only brings joy but also reconnects individuals with their inner child, fostering lightheartedness in an often serious adult world.

By the end of the month, the author realizes that despite initial apprehensions, the challenge of gratitude and happiness was a rewarding

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journey, reinforcing the significance of positivity and the importance of maintaining a sense of joy and silliness in everyday life. Thus, Month Ten stands completed, embodying the essence of gratitude, joy, and constructive self-reflection.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Gratitude transforms your perspective

Critical Interpretation: Imagine waking up each day and intentionally focusing on the things you are grateful for, even in the midst of challenges. By embracing gratitude, you actively shift your mindset from one of scarcity and negativity to one filled with appreciation and positivity. It's a practice that encourages you to see value in the everyday moments—whether it's a supportive family, a warm meal, or even the simple joy of a sunny day. Integrating a gratitude journal into your routine can serve as a powerful tool, helping you acknowledge your blessings and combat stress. This life-changing perspective not only promotes happiness but also fosters resilience, enabling you to navigate life's difficulties with a more hopeful and open heart.

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Chapter 12: Month 11: Conquer My Fears

In "Month Eleven," the protagonist embarks on a transformative journey as they participate in NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month), a global writing challenge that encourages participants to produce a 50,000-word manuscript within 30 days. This marks the first time they fully commit to the endeavor after hesitating for four years, motivated by their public resolution to tackle their fears head-on.

As a dedicated procrastinator, the author had allowed countless story ideas to linger unexpressed, but NaNoWriMo presents a structured outlet, providing them with not only a plot and outline but the necessary motivation to bring their story to life. With a vibrant community of nearly 287,000 fellow writers, the experience becomes an enriching one, offering camaraderie and support. The protagonist starts strong, quickly amassing over 36,000 words by day six, yet their initial excitement is tempered by the daunting accomplishments of others, prompting a realization that determination can lead to remarkable outcomes.

Throughout the month, the protagonist learns significant lessons:

- The power of community: Despite not meeting every participant, they forge meaningful connections with fellow writers worldwide.
- Self-belief: They discover their own capabilities and the joy of writing under a deadline, enhancing their focus and productivity.



- Embracing creativity: Even absurd questions about plot twists can be explored freely in writing forums, with the understanding that creativity thrives in an open environment.

As the month progresses, the author finds themselves fully engrossed in their fantasy narrative, managing to reach the 50,296-word mark in just nine days, celebrating this milestone with their children. Their characters transform into beloved companions, and though they feel bittersweet about completing the first draft, the challenge ignites the potential for a trilogy.

However, with achievement comes the familiar resurgence of self-doubt concerning the quality of their written work. Recognizing this inner critic as a recurring obstacle, the protagonist reflects on their journey, understanding that avoiding fear only leads to stagnation. They draw upon insights gained from their blogging experiences to confront this critical voice strategically, advocating for understanding and self-compassion in the face of criticism.

The chapter poignantly compares the intensity of the NaNoWriMo experience to popular reality shows like "I'm a Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!"—both requiring resilience and stamina, whether in the jungle or at a writing desk. As November nears its end, the author reflects on their triumphs and the broader implications of 'failure,' choosing to view setbacks as 'not now' moments instead of defeats.

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The encouragement received through the writing process leads to a valuable rejection letter for a short story, reinforcing the idea that every writer faces challenges but can glean growth from setbacks. The protagonist's journey culminates in an uplifting realization that pursuing dreams—even amidst difficulties—validates their efforts and revitalizes their life. The chapter closes with a declaration of victory in facing their fears, illustrating that complacency isn't an option when passion and ambition drive one forward.

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Chapter 13 Summary: Month 12: Make Homemade Gifts

In this chapter, the narrator reflects on their creative journey inspired by their mother's passion for crafting and baking. Attending the local Hobbycrafts show at Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre has become a cherished mother-daughter tradition, filled with excitement and discovery. The narrator admires the demonstrators' talent and recalls childhood memories of their mother's cake baking and crafting skills.

As the narrator embarks on a personal challenge to create homemade cards and gifts, they consider whether their mother's artistic flair is hereditary. They are particularly drawn to Lavinia Stamps, known for enchanting designs featuring fairies and mystical elements, further igniting their creative spirit.

Despite initial struggles with their card-making attempts, the narrator finds joy in the messiness of crafting. Recognizing the therapeutic benefits of making personalized gifts, they decide to create special "friendship bags" containing crystals and personal items reflecting the characters of their children. Each bag features crystals linked to their star signs and other meaningful elements, highlighting the thoughtfulness behind each gift.

Inspired by their success with these gift bags, the narrator shares ideas for others to personalize gifts, emphasizing that it's the thought that counts,



whether incorporating sweets or fun trinkets. They also attempt to make peppermint creams, a simple yet rewarding endeavor that illustrates the satisfaction of crafting homemade treats.

Shifting from sweets to savory, the narrator sets out to make chutney for their father's Christmas dinner. They delve into chutney's intriguing history, tracing its origins back to Major Grey, a British officer in Colonial India, who popularized mango chutney. Learning about chutney's varied recipes, the narrator opts for a quicker no-cook spiced apple version, which requires minimal effort and time.

As the chapter progresses, the narrator reflects on their achievements over the past year and the joy of completing their creative mission, marking the end of their twelve-month journey with a sense of fulfillment. By sharing their crafting journey, they inspire others to explore their own creativity, celebrate their unique traditions, and take pride in making personalized gifts that are heartfelt and meaningful.

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Chapter 14 Summary: That's All Folks...

In the chapter, the narrator reflects on a transformative year that began with a moment of introspection 52 weeks earlier. Sitting with family, they felt a familiar disappointment about unfulfilled aspirations as one year gave way to another. Unlike previous turning points in their life—such as marriage, parenting, or overcoming past abuse—this time they were content on the surface, successfully managing a beloved business and enjoying family life. Yet, the narrator harbored unfulfilled dreams like writing a book, learning a new skill, and being more artistic.

Determined to enact change, the narrator resolved that this New Year would be different. Instead of attempting to achieve all their goals at once—something that had previously overwhelmed them—they decided to break the year down into manageable monthly challenges. This approach made their resolutions feel less daunting and more attainable, prompting them to compile a list of aspirations, including losing weight, dedicating time to reading, spending quality family time, and finally tackling the elusive task of writing.

In seeking accountability and motivation, the narrator took an innovative step: starting a blog to document their journey publicly. Unfamiliar with blogging, they embraced the challenge and set up an online space, unaware that this leap would connect them with over 15,000 readers and create a



community of support. They learned from other bloggers, gaining insights into perseverance and self-belief. This commitment to blogging reshaped their original list of twelve goals into a more ambitious plan featuring 52 weekly challenges.

By breaking down each month into weekly tasks, the narrator found clarity and focus, making progress toward their goals manageable and enjoyable. For instance, the plan to exercise more was transformed into specific activities like cycling and walking, providing variety and excitement. This strategy fostered spontaneity, encouraging the narrator to seize opportunities for personal growth, such as attending a writing workshop where they met bestselling author Stan Nicholls.

Ultimately, the chapter illustrates the narrator's journey of self-discovery and achievement, showcasing how a single decision on New Year's Eve set off a chain of events that led to meaningful friendships and accomplishments. This commitment to their resolutions not only revitalized their sense of purpose but also deepened their connections with others, proving that taking small steps towards goals can yield significant life changes.

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